
BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20554

In the matter of

Complainant,

v.

Defendant.

File No. (To be inserted by the Commission)

[Insert Subject/Nature of Violation]

Carriage Agreement Complaint

TO: The Commission.

The complainant (here insert full name of complainant, and if a corporation, the corporate title of such complainant)

1. (Here state the complainant's post office address and telephone number.)

2. (Here insert the name, defendant's method of multichannel video distribution, address and telephone number of defendant).

3. (Here insert fully and clearly the specific act or thing complained of, together with such facts as are necessary to give full understanding of the matter, including relevant legal and documentary support).

Wherefore, complainant asks (here state specifically the relief desired, including rationale and relevant legal and documentary support for such relief).

(Date)

(Name of complainant)

(Name, address, and telephone number of attorney, if any)

(4) The complaint must be accompanied by appropriate evidence demonstrating that the required notification pursuant to paragraph (a) of this

section has been made.

(d) Answer.

(1) Any multichannel video programming distributor upon which a carriage agreement complaint is served under this section shall answer within thirty (30) days of service of the complaint, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.

(2) The answer shall advise the parties and the Commission fully and completely of the nature of any and all defenses, and shall respond specifically to all material allegations of the complaint. Collateral or immaterial issues shall be avoided in answers and every effort should be made to narrow the issues. Any defendant failing to file and serve an answer within the time and in the manner prescribed by these rules may be deemed in default and an order may be entered against defendant in accordance with the allegations contained in the complaint.

(3) The answer shall state concisely any and all defenses to each claim asserted and shall admit or deny the averments on which the adverse party relies. If the defendant is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of an averment, the defendant shall so state and this has the effect of a denial. When a defendant intends in good faith to deny only part of an averment, the answer shall specify so much of it as is true and shall deny only the remainder. The defendant may make its denials as specific denials of designated averments or paragraphs, or may generally deny all the averments except such designated averments or paragraphs as the defendant expressly admits. When the defendant intends to controvert all averments, the defendant may do so by general denial.

(4) Averments in a complaint are deemed to be admitted when not denied in the answer.

(5) The answer shall also address the relief requested in the complaint, including legal and documentary support for such response, and may include an alternative relief proposal without prejudice to any denials or defenses raised.

(e) Reply.

Within twenty (20) days after service of an answer, the complainant may file and serve a reply which shall be responsive to matters contained in the answer and shall not contain new matters. Failure to reply will not be deemed an admission of any allegations contained in the answer, except with respect to any affirmative defenses set forth therein.

(f) Motions.

Except as provided in this section, or upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances, additional motions or pleadings by any party will not be accepted.

(g) Discovery.

(1) The Commission staff may in its discretion order discovery limited to the issues specified by the Commission. Such discovery may include answers to written interrogatories or document production.

(2) The Commission staff may in its discretion hold a status conference with the parties, pursuant to paragraph (j) of this section, to determine the scope of discovery.

(3) If the Commission staff determines that extensive discovery is required or that resolution of the complaint will require resolution of disputed facts, the staff will advise the parties that the proceeding will be referred to an administrative law judge in accordance with paragraph (m) of this section.

(h) Confidentiality of proprietary information.

(1) Any materials generated or provided by a party in the course of adjudicating a carriage agreement complaint under this provision may be designated as proprietary by that party if the party believes in good faith that the materials fall within an exemption to disclosure contained in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. §552(b). Any party asserting confidentiality for such materials shall so indicate by clearly marking each page, or portion thereof, for which a proprietary designation is claimed. If a proprietary designation is challenged, the party claiming confidentiality will have the burden of demonstrating, by a preponderance

of the evidence, that the material designated as proprietary falls under the standards for nondisclosure enunciated in the FOIA.

(2) Materials marked as proprietary may be disclosed solely to the following persons, only for use in prosecuting or defending a party to the complaint action, and only to the extent necessary to assist in the prosecution or defense of the case:

(i) Counsel of record representing the parties in the complaint action and any support personnel employed by such attorneys;

(ii) Officers or employees of the opposing party who are named by the opposing party as being directly involved in the prosecution or defense of the case;

(iii) Consultants or expert witnesses retained by the parties;

(iv) The Commission and its staff; and

(v) Court reporters and stenographers in accordance with the terms and conditions of this section. These individuals shall not disclose information designated as proprietary to any person who is not authorized under this section to receive such information, and shall not use the information in any activity or function other than the prosecution or defense in the case before the Commission. Each individual who is provided access to the information by the opposing party shall sign a notarized statement affirmatively stating, or shall certify under penalty of perjury, that the individual has personally reviewed the Commission's rules and understands the limitations they impose on the signing party.

(3) No copies of materials marked proprietary may be made except copies to be used by persons designated in paragraph (h)(2) of this section. Each party shall maintain a log recording the number of copies made of all proprietary material and the persons to whom the copies have been provided.

(4) Upon termination of the complaint proceeding, including all appeals and petitions, all originals and reproductions of any proprietary materials, along with the log recording persons who received copies of such materials, shall be provided to the

producing party. In addition, upon final termination of the complaint proceeding, any notes or other work product derived in whole or in part from the proprietary materials of an opposing or third party shall be destroyed.

(i) Other required written submissions.

(1) The Commission may, in its discretion, require the parties to file briefs summarizing the facts and issues presented in the pleadings and other record evidence. These briefs shall contain the findings of fact and conclusions of law which that party is urging the Commission to adopt, with specific citations to the record, and supported by relevant authority and analysis.

(2) The Commission may require the parties to submit any additional information it deems appropriate for a full, fair, and expeditious resolution of the proceeding, including copies of all contracts and documents reflecting arrangements and understandings alleged to violate the carriage agreement requirements set forth in the Communications Act and Section 76.1301 of this subpart, as well as affidavits and exhibits.

(3) Any briefs submitted shall be filed concurrently by both the complainant and defendant at such time as is designated by the staff. Such briefs shall not exceed fifty (50) pages.

(4) Reply briefs may be submitted by either party within twenty (20) days from the date initial briefs are due. Reply briefs shall not exceed thirty (30) pages.

(5) Briefs containing information which is claimed by an opposing or third party to be proprietary under paragraph (h) of this section shall be submitted to the Commission in confidence pursuant to the requirements of §0.459 of this chapter, and shall be clearly marked "Not for Public Inspection." An edited version removing all proprietary data shall be filed with the Commission for inclusion in the public file within five (5) days from the date the unedited version is submitted and served on opposing parties.

(j) Status conference.

(1) In any carriage agreement complaint proceeding, the Commission staff may in its discretion direct the attorneys and/or the parties to appear for a conference to consider:

(i) Simplification or narrowing of the issues;

(ii) The necessity for or desirability of amendments to the pleadings, additional pleadings, or other evidentiary submissions;

(iii) Obtaining admissions of fact or stipulations between the parties as to any or all of the matters in controversy;

(iv) Settlement of the matters in controversy by agreement of the parties;

(v) The necessity for and extent of discovery, including objections to interrogatories or requests for written documents;

(vi) The need and schedule for filing briefs, and the date for any further conferences; and

(vii) Such other matters that may aid in the disposition of the complaint.

(2) Any party may request that a conference be held at any time after the complaint has been filed.

(3) Conferences will be scheduled by the Commission at such time and place as it may designate, to be conducted in person or by telephone conference call.

(4) The failure of any attorney or party, following reasonable notice, to appear at a scheduled conference will be deemed a waiver and will not preclude the Commission from conferring with those parties or counsel present.

(5) During a status conference, the Commission staff may issue oral rulings pertaining to a variety of interlocutory matters relevant to the conduct of a carriage agreement complaint proceeding including, inter alia, procedural matters, discovery, and the submission of briefs or other evidentiary materials. These rulings will be promptly memorialized in writing and served on the parties. When such

rulings require a party to take affirmative action not subject to deadlines established by another provision of this subpart, such action will be required within ten (10) days from the date of the written memorialization unless otherwise directed by the staff.

(k) Specifications as to pleadings, briefs, and other documents; subscriptions.

(1) All papers filed in a carriage agreement complaint proceeding must be drawn in conformity with the requirements of §§1.49 and 1.50 of this chapter.

(2) All averments of claims or defenses in complaints and answers shall be made in numbered paragraphs. The contents of each paragraph shall be limited as far as practicable to a statement of a single set of circumstances. Each claim founded on a separate transaction or occurrence and each affirmative defense shall be separately stated to facilitate the clear presentation of the matters set forth.

(3) The original of all pleadings and submissions by any party shall be signed by that party, or by the party's attorney. Complaints must be signed by the complainant. The signing party shall state his or her address and telephone number and the date on which the document was signed. Copies should be conformed to the original. Except when otherwise specifically provided by rule or statute, pleadings need not be verified. The signature of an attorney or party shall be a certification that the attorney or party has read the pleading, motion, or other paper; that to the best of his or her knowledge, information and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, it is well grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification or reversal of existing law; and that it is not interposed for any improper purpose. If any pleading or other submission is signed in violation of this provision, the Commission shall upon motion or upon its own initiative impose upon the party an appropriate sanction. Where the pleading or submission is signed by counsel, the provisions of §§1.52 and 1.24 of this chapter shall also apply.

(1) Copies; service.

(1) The complainant shall file an original plus three copies of the complaint with the Commission.

(2) An original plus two copies shall be filed of all pleadings and documents other than the complaint.

(3) The complainant shall serve the complaint on each defendant at the same time that it is filed at the Commission.

(4) All subsequent pleadings and briefs, as well as all letters, documents or other written submissions, shall be served by the filing party on all other parties to the proceeding, together with proof of such service in accordance with the requirements of §1.47 of this chapter.

(5) The parties to any carriage agreement complaint proceeding brought pursuant to this section may be required to file additional copies of any or all papers filed in the proceeding.

(m) Referral to administrative law judge.

(1) After reviewing the complaint, answer and reply, and at any stage of the proceeding thereafter, the Commission staff may, in its discretion, designate any carriage agreement complaint proceeding for an adjudicatory hearing before an administrative law judge.

(2) Before designation for hearing, the staff shall notify, either orally or in writing, the parties to the proceeding of its intent to so designate, and the parties shall be given a period of ten (10) days to elect to resolve the dispute through alternative dispute resolution procedures, or to proceed with an adjudicatory hearing. Such election shall be submitted in writing to the Commission.

(3) Unless otherwise directed by the Commission, or upon motion by the Mass Media Bureau Chief, the Mass Media Bureau Chief shall not be deemed to be a party to a carriage agreement complaint proceeding designated for a hearing before an administrative law judge pursuant to this paragraph.

(n) Petitions for reconsideration.

Petitions for reconsideration of interlocutory actions by the Commission's staff or by an administrative law judge will not be entertained. Petitions for reconsideration of a decision on the merits made by the Commission's staff should be filed in accordance with §§1.104-1.106 of this chapter.

(o) Interlocutory review.

(1) Except as provided below, no party may seek review of interlocutory rulings until a decision on the merits has been issued by the staff or administrative law judge.

(2) Rulings listed in this paragraph are reviewable as a matter of right. An application for review of such ruling may not be deferred and raised as an exception to a decision on the merits.

(i) If the staff's ruling denies or terminates the right of any person to participate as a party to the proceeding, such person, as a matter of right, may file an application for review of that ruling.

(ii) If the staff's ruling requires production of documents or other written evidence, over objection based on a claim of privilege, the ruling on the claim of privilege is reviewable as a matter of right.

(iii) If the staff's ruling denies a motion to disqualify a staff person from participating in the proceeding, the ruling is reviewable as a matter of right.

(p) Expedited review.

(1) Any party to a carriage agreement complaint proceeding aggrieved by any decision on the merits issued by the staff pursuant to delegated authority may file an application for review by the Commission in accordance with §1.115 of this chapter.

(2) Any party to a carriage agreement complaint proceeding aggrieved by any decision on the merits by an administrative law judge may file an appeal of the decision directly with the Commission, in accordance with §1.276(a) and §§1.277(a)-(c) of this

chapter, except that unless a stay is granted by the Commission, the decision by the administrative law judge will become effective upon release and will remain in effect pending appeal.

(g) Frivolous complaints.

It shall be unlawful for any party to file a frivolous complaint with the Commission alleging any violation of this subpart. Any violation of this paragraph shall constitute an abuse of process subject to appropriate sanctions.

(r) Statute of limitations.

Any complaint filed pursuant to this subsection must be filed within one year of the date on which one of the following events occurs:

(1) the multichannel video programming distributor enters into a contract with the complainant that the complainant alleges to violate one or more of the rules contained in this subpart; or

(2) the multichannel video programming distributor offers to carry the complainant's programming pursuant to terms that the complainant alleges to violate one or more of the rules contained in this subpart; or

(3) the complainant has notified a multichannel video programming distributor that it intends to file a complaint with the Commission based on a request for carriage or to negotiate for carriage of its programming on defendant's distribution system that has been denied or unacknowledged, allegedly in violation of one or more of the rules contained in this subpart.

(s) Remedies for violations.

(1) Remedies authorized. Upon completion of such adjudicatory proceeding, the Commission shall order appropriate remedies, including, if necessary, mandatory carriage of complainant's programming on defendant's video distribution system, or the establishment of prices, terms, and conditions for the carriage of complainant's programming. Such order shall set forth a timetable for compliance, and shall become effective upon release, unless any order of mandatory carriage would require the defendant multichannel video programming distributor

to delete existing programming from its system to accommodate carriage of complainant's programming. In such instances, if the defendant seeks review of the staff or administrative law judge decision, the order for carriage of complainant's programming will not become effective unless and until the decision of the staff or administrative law judge is upheld by the Commission. If the Commission upholds the remedy ordered by the staff or administrative law judge in its entirety, the defendant will be required to carry the complainant's programming for an additional period of time equal to the time elapsed between the staff or administrative law judge decision and the Commission's ruling, on the terms and conditions approved by the Commission.

(2) **Additional sanctions.** The remedies provided in paragraph (s)(1) of this section are in addition to and not in lieu of the sanctions available under title V or any other provision of the Communications Act.

6. Sections 76.1303-76.1305 are reserved.

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